N°. XIII.

THE

THESPIAN MIRROR.

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 22, 1806.

To the Public.

THE Editor of the THESPIAN MIRROR respectfully acquaints his friends and subscribers, that, in consequence of circumstances which have transpired since the publication of the fourth number of his miscellany, he has resolved to relinquish the editorial duties of that work, in order, more particularly, to apply himself to studies, which may promote his future usefulness in life, and mature, strengthen, and extend a disposition for literature, which has grown with his earliest years.

When the MIRROR was commenced in this city, it was under circumstances which have since become materially altered. From the interest which some warm-hearted friends, (perhaps injudiciously,) took in the Editor, the work was brought forward, and enthusiastically ushered into public notice. Various were the sentiments of the community respecting it, and as various was popular conjecture on the effects of the misdirected exertions of its juvenile Editor. From a wish to render him *useful* rather than *ornamental* in society, plans were agitated for placing him in the full possession of advantages, with which he might cultivate a literary taste, and direct his view to objects which promised benefit to his country, satisfaction to his friends, and utility and honor to himself. The work which he had heedlessly commenced, was considered, by the judicious, as the fruit of an itch for scribbling, the materials for which, without a more extensive stock of ideas, drawn from the pure foun-

tains of classical learning, would be soon exhausted. The patronage of one, to whom he *feels* obligations which he cannot express, has placed within his reach advantages, the rejection of which, would be the height of folly and ingratitude. A collegiate education will, therefore, be the object of his present pursuit, and the study of the law, the *goal* of his future exertions; and, determined exclusively to devote himself to these important objects, he now declares his design of discontinuing the MIRROR, after the publication of this number (which completes the original term of engagement) and of waiting patiently the laurels of *fame*, until *science* shall expand his mind, and crown his labours with lasting and deserved celebrity.

He begs leave to express his warmest acknowledgments to those friends, who have encouraged him, by their assistance, in the advancement of the MIRROR: he is convinced that, feeling for his real welfare, they will approve the step which he has taken: and he assures them, that cherishing the most grateful sentiments, he will never feel himself more happy, than in the opportunity of expressing that esteem, with which he is,

Their much obliged,
And very humble servant,
JOHN H. PAYNE.

Fugitive Lucubrations.

NO. VI.

"Trifles light as air."

MR. EDITOR,

I GAVE you a short time since, a specimen of my friend Bob Helicon's epistolary rhymes. Interpolations and omissions his severity made indispensible; and from the detached members which were there presented, your readers could scarcely form an idea of the *tout ensemble* of the structure. I must therefore beg leave, before they pass sentence on my friend, to refer them to an ampler specimen. I am not however without my fears as to Bob's vanity. My encomiums appear undoubtedly to have tickled him—for I received from him last week an acknowledge-

ment of the notice which I had taken of him, in an Heroic of *two hundred verses*. His prognostications of future fame are no way inferior to the

Exegi monumentum ære perennius

of Horace.—Indeed I should have given your readers this elegant acknowledgment, had it not been sufficiently voluminous to have engrossed a dozen of your miscellanies. In addition to this flourish, Bob writes me word, that I shall receive by the next mail, a dictionary of all the words that jingle in our language. This will be a most serviceable work, and may perhaps place many a bard on the stepping stone to that elevation, which Bob has already reached. I understand too that he has versified the genealogy of Moses, and contemplates turning Ainsworth's Dictionary into *blank* verse. How useful to society are such poets.—How superior to the *sing-song* race of bards whose highest effort is to melt on the ear of some silly fair one, and whose highest reward is the pitiful pittance of *a smile!*

But to return to the letter in question. In order to give some appearance of *reason* as well as *rhyme* to its tissue, I must give at least an outline of the letter which provoked it. This was one which I wrote in a very stupid mood, to drive away the phantoms of an afternoon's ennui. I began with a compliment to Bob's proficiency in *epistolary versifying*, proceeded with an apology for my dullness (one of the most striking proofs of it)—proceeded to relate Mr. Hodgkinson's recent loss by a concert—cautioned Bob as to the approach of his professional ordeal, (for though nature intended him for a poet, education has contrived to make a lawyer of him) and concluded in the usual style. The following is Bob's whimsical acknowledgment.

Thanks to you friend; a compliment I ween
Oft cures the ague, or relieves the spleen;
And tho' nor spleen, nor ague's chill have I,
Words fram'd with such a grace and air,
Are quite resistless words I swear;
Death to the senseless soul that feels not flattery!
Adieu to critic's frowns, or critic's jeer!
Your worship's letters find no critic here,
With such a preface grac'd, Ah who could be severe!
Peace to your errors; let your beauties rise,
And in a bright perspective quit the eyes.

Here Shelty strives, in vain, to *raise the wind*,
By fortune foil'd, to merit ever *blind*;
While arch Oldmixon, tipt with many a crown,
Laughs in her sleeve, well pleas'd, and quits the town:

There bag-wig'd Law uprears his awful head,
And direst omens half the page o'erspread;
Examinations, like a tip-staff frown,
And fetch, alas, the Poet's spirits down,
Or rather—soon will fetch himself to town.

Now, as for Country news, of rapes and plots,
What Maid the *cholic* has, what Horse the *botts*,
If Corn be plenty, or Potatoes dear,
From *me* you'll hear not, tho' you died to hear:
The drought, indeed, has made us folks look blue,
In trembling for the *crops*, we felt for *you*;
You, who without our bounteous aid must starve,
Nor have an Egg to crack, nor Duck to carve;
"Nay—frown not thus on me"—for shut *your* pockets,
And what becomes of Plays and *brimstone** Rockets?
Your well-bred Belles, alas, must take to churning,
And Beaux to milching Cows, or pancake-turning:
And so—we Country folks, when *larned* grown,
May find some news to tell you folks in town:
Yet pause for Heaven's sake—I forgot to say,
A luckless spavin lam'd our little grey;
So he goes lame, that never limpt before,
And I'd write farther, if I could write more.

So wishing you may long retain
Good humour, health, and fun,
Believe me, ever I remain,
Your friend,

BOB HELICON.

The American Stage.

Imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis.....Cicero.
The Imitation of Life...the Mirror of Manners...the Transcript of Truth.

THEATRICAL REGISTER.

"'Tis with our judgments, as our watches....none
"Go just alike....but each believes his own."

MONDAY, MARCH 17.

Chapter of Accidents (Miss Lee).—*Raising the Wind* (Kennedy.)

The house gave honorable testimony that the merits of our old favourite JEFFERSON, were still remembered. It was well filled and the audience

* A vile slander this, on one of the first manufacturers of squibs and comets, that ever enlightened a summer atmosphere. B.

respectable. We, however, did not see so many young ladies in pink hats, as on the nights of Mr. COOPER's performance, and we accounted for their absence by supposing them resting after the fatigues of the last week's campaign.

The Chapter of Accidents is a play of very considerable merit, and was it not chequered with too many indelicate speeches and allusions, would receive more unqualified approbation. We forbear, however, to enlarge on these blemishes; for, as the play is written by a lady, and a *maiden lady* too, it would look like over-wrought delicacy, to find fault with it for being a little licentious.

Relying on our recollection of the chaste, natural, and high-wrought humour of Mr. JEFFERSON, we anticipated much gratification from his performance of *Jacob Gawkey*, and our expectations were realised to the "top of *their* compass." He was received with those repeated bursts of applause, which to an actor of sensibility are the strongest incentives to excellence, and its best reward.

Mr. JEFFERSON's performance was throughout an inimitable picture of nature. His gestures, his voice, his air, and above all the speaking expression of his countenance, delighted the house, and converted what had so lately been a tabernacle of tears, into one of the most favoured temples of Momus. We do not remember for a long time, to have witnessed so much "excellent mirth." In conformity to the invariable rules of good and substantial criticism, we ought to find some fault with Mr. J. and we would willingly treat our readers with this proof of our sagacity, by pointing out some *false readings*, shewing "as clear as the sun in a cucumber," how he should have emphasized and accented *this* word instead of *that*, and kindly informing him that Shakespeare,—I mean Miss Lee——meant *so and so*, instead of *thus and thus*: But really we think such idle verbage is, to say the very best of it, rather like treating the public with a dish of flim-flams. We have seen such "*readings*" of Shakespeare as were enough to make a man run stark mad, and if such things continue, we shall ere long, hear honest Will's ghost "squeak and gibber" away, like the ghost in Gaffer Thumb.

Mr. TYLER's performance was interesting and impressive. There was a chastened energy in his voice and action highly appropriate to the character of the good old pastor. We have never seen the character better performed.

Mr. JOHNSON gave the whimsical passionate governor with considerable effect. There was perhaps a little too much grimace for a governor. But, however, we know of no reason why a governor may not be fond of *making faces*, as well as another man.

Mr. YOUNG *looked* the character of Woodville very well, and promised much; but we cannot say that he kept his promise.—There is a solemn march of monotonous harshness in his voice, and a sort of *growling*

when he encounters the letter *r*, which is extremely annoying to organs of common sensibility. We would recommend it to this gentleman sometimes to descend from the majesty of the Buskin'd hero, and both in voice and action to come nearer the sober dignity, which ought to characterise the gentleman, in real life, of which comedy is, or ought to be, a faithful picture: tragedy may sometimes be allowed to declaim, but comedy never. Mr. YOUNG possesses powers which, chastened by taste and judgment, will carry him high in his profession.

The *juvenile* HALLAM performed Capt. Harcourt in the most *good humour* imaginable, as to say the truth he always does every other character. Tragedy, comedy, comical tragedy, or tragical comedy, all one to him, so he may but show his teeth. We are not inclined to quarrel with a man for *grinning*, provided he does not annoy the public—when he does, the public have a right to take him to task for *grinning* at them.

Mr. ROBINSON personated the peer with considerable dignity, though he was coloured so highly, that we could not help conjecturing Mr. R. had some good reason to suppose that his lordship was a little addicted to the bottle. As this over colouring seems to be the fashion of the house, we shall say nothing against it, although the ladies in the boxes should complain of their pink bonnets being put out of countenance.

Mrs. JOHNSON pourtrayed the interesting heroine with great feeling. This lady, when uttering the sentiments of truth and virtue, possesses a lofty eloquence and energy, that convince the hearer every word comes from the heart. It is with the most deferential diffidence that we presume to differ from the *Curatii*, but really it was rather whimsical in *them* to imagine that the author intends Cecilia for a merry comical lady, and that Mrs. J. mistook the character, when she exhibited the *gloom* of a mind worn down with the conflicts of duty and love. As far as we can recollect, Cecilia has not in the whole progress of the piece, the least occasion to be merry.

Mrs. BRIDGET, though of considerable consequence to the machinery of the piece, is in our eyes a most disagreeable personage. We should have no objection to her vulgarity, were it not joined to pertness, lewdness, and profligacy. There is a vast deal too much of her; and it should be the aim of a judicious actress, to soften these disagreeable characteristicks, in order to prevent the sensations of the better part of the audience from degenerating into disgust. MRS. VILLIERS is a considerable favourite with us, but she exhibited Bridget upon much too broad a scale.

Mr. JEFFERSON's performance of Didler was not exactly what we expected from his genuine humour. We think the character was *caricatured*. In personating such non-descript animals as Caleb Quotem, Ollopod, or Lingo, an actor may, without infringing the laws of nature, in-

dulge in every kind of extravagance, for nature has nothing to do with such imaginary beings. Didler, however, is a real transcript, and "Raising the Wind" a vocation practised by many young bucks of the new, as well as the old world. Mr. JEFFERSON will most assuredly offend those "gentle-folk," who are very often seen at the theatre, if he presumes to appear again in this character without having his coat mended. The members of this honourable fraternity always "Raise the wind" in whole coats.

A Mr. Somebody, who performed Fainwou'd, did so rant it, when poor Miss Durable, with the best intention in the world, threw a glass of water in his face, that we could not help most devoutly wishing it had been a pail full. It is a pity if, when a man has a mind to "tear a passion to rags," his words should obstinately refuse to "come forth." This was unfortunately the case with *our Homo*, who had a bushel of hot words "lodged in the thorax," not one of which would budge an inch without being pulled out neck and heels. We would recommend to him a famous experiment practised upon a certain *stutterer*, in an Italian opera, who being effectually stopped in a very interesting story, by a hard word, which like "amen stuck in *his* throat," his friend, in order to help him along, hit him a prodigious hard blow in his stomach, whereat the aforesaid word bounced out like the bung of a beer barrel, and occasioned immediate relief to the poor stammerer, who had well nigh given up the ghost.

An apology was made for Mr. SHAPTER, whom illness prevented from performing. It is really provoking, as the *Curiatii* in the Morning Chonicle judiciously observe, that these obstinate actors *will persist* in getting sick, when they ought to know better. And, as the *Curiatii* further observe, it is likewise really provoking, that the managers *apologise, and do not apologise* for this obstinacy. We ourselves have observed new candle-snuffers, and *even* new scene-shifters employed, without the audience (to their great detriment) knowing any thing of the matter, or the managers making the least apology. They had better look to this, or they "shall hear of it!"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ABOUT to close our editorial labours, we cannot help expressing our obligations to those, who have contributed by their communications to the interest of our work. LODINUS has our highest thanks; and CLARA is not forgotten in our gratitude. The correspondence between *Lodinus* and the fair recluse, will not fail to interest the reader, and we lament that our page can be no longer the vehicle of the tenderness and pathos of LAVINIA.

The writer under the signature of B. will be sensible of the obligations which we owe him, by the regret with which he may be assured we part with him, and his merry friend Bob Helicon.

Poetry.

TO LODINUS.

YES, Sorrow's pencil, sure can paint her form,
" And Fancy trace its semblance thro' a tear,"
Far in the wilderness of gloom, unknown
She dwells; the victim of illusive dreams,
Of Hope's fond whisper'd tale; and, weeping, guards
The hallowed ashes of the friend she lov'd:
But, never—never shall she meet thine eye,
Or share the soothing solace of a smile.
Tho' her rude strain hath once thine ear assail'd,
And seem'd to wake, alas! a jarring string;
Yet, could her numbers, varying like thine own,
Still waft a varied pleasure with each note;
Or, could she with a magic force like thine,
Forever hold each finer sense entranc'd;
Oh! she would quickly wake the chord of joy,
And bid its sweetest cadence swell thy name;
Bid mem'ry, o'er her softest hour suspend
The wing; bid joy, in many colour'd robe
Advance; bid love's delights thy steps attend;
And all thy coming hours serenely flow;
Fair as thy morning dawn of life; soft as
The infant sleep, thy angel mother watch'd;
Gay as the fairy dream that clothes in smiles
Thy face; and tender as the guardian love
That mark'd thy growing years. But, ah! how vain
The wish tho' ever warm its source, that would
The faded vision of a transient bliss
Recall; that strives to cheat each sense of pain
And light the Pilgrim's weary way to hope,
Smooth the rough path where alien'd genius roams,
And strew with flow'rs his thorn-entangled way;
Arouse the fluttering pulse to joy's wild beat
Long dead: awake the eyes' quick glance of fire,
And dress the world in more than fancied smiles.
But, ah! her lyre to sadder themes attun'd,
Breathes not a note but mingles with a sigh;
Cold in the breast where once warm friendship reign'd,
Hope gives th' extinguished lamp to dark despair,
And yields her trembling empire o'er——
Yet, oh! while genius has a charm to wake
The willing pulses of her heart—while from
The quiv'ring lip of grief one breath to Heaven
Ascends, and there its own release implores;
In the warm sigh enwrapt thy name shall rise,
And gain a blessing from thy native skies.

LAVINIA.

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